THE MINISTER OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) Several States have been very proactive in implementing disinvestment. However, the States in general, continue to be burdened by the need to subsidise non-viable State Level Public Enterprises. As per data compiled by this Ministry, during the year 2000-2001, six States namely, Assam, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Orissa and West Bengal, have provided a sum of Rs. 7,961 crore as budgetary suppoort, grants/subsidies, guarantees, waiver of dues and conversion of loan into equity.

(b) State Goverments formulate disinvestment policy and procedures on their own, though some States have adopted the pattern followed by the Central Government. In the year 2002-2003, against a target of Rs. 12,000 crore, Rs. 3,342.06 crore had been realised till 17th February 2003 by the Government.

Disinvestment of IRE

232. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of DISINVESTMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the IRE of Chavara in Kerala stands recommended for disinvestment;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Prime Minister's announcement to start a project in public sector for mineral sand exploration in Kerala appears to be a constradiction when there is a proposal to disinvest the IRE;

(d) whether Government are aware that privatisation and foreign participation in IRE in Kerala would adversely effect the security aspects of the country since it has been engaging with the strategic mineral "Thorium"; and

(e) whether Government would review the decision to disinvest the IRE?

THE MINISTER OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) and (b) No proposal for disinvestment in Indian Rare Earths Ltd. (IREL) is at present under consideration of the Government.

(c) and (e) Do not arise.